

Rainy Day Woman by ObeyDontStray

Series: [In Another Life \(AU collection\)](#) [11]

Category: Stranger Things - Fandom

Genre: 80's, Multi, Not The Car, The news anchor, loosely inspired by the movie Christine, several OCs - Freeform

Language: English

Characters: Callahan, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Marissa the librarian, Powell

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-06-02

Updated: 2017-09-03

Packaged: 2022-04-02 01:40:45

Rating: Mature

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 4

Words: 5,033

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

AU in which James 'Jim' Hopper is a playboy news anchorman and his effect on the lives of those around him in a newsroom that the director built around him.

1. Cloudy Day

Author's Note:

So in the movie Christine, about Christine Chubbuck, Michael C Hall looked a lot like clean shaven David Harbour. So this happened. Read about Christine, what a tragic, tragic case.

He looked nearly imposing, sitting tall in his chair behind his desk, shoulders squared and broad. A former football jock now sitting behind a news desk, smoothing his navy blue tie and the lapels of his grey suit. He mumbled to himself lightly as he read his notes, the muscles in his clean shaven jaw working as he talked.

"Joyce! Joyce!" Pam, the other intern for the tv station, shook her shoulder. "I know he's dreamy but come on we're got stuff to do!" She said, handing her a tray of coffee. "Here, make his day and bring him some coffee." Joyce gave her a frantic look. "He won't bite. He's actually a really nice guy. Here-" she passed Joyce notes. "They updated his notes anyway. Take them and his coffee to him. And just talk to him. But don't get too comfortable. I'm going to be the one to marry him." She teased, winking at Joyce.

He looked up from his paperwork when she approached him. "Oh thank you!" He smiled warmly as she passed the styrofoam cup to him. "Thank god for coffee!"

"Um, they said they changed up your notes." She said passing him the paperwork. "Gah I hate it when they change stuff on me right before airtime. Thank you..." He trailed off as he looked up at her. "J-Joyce. I'm an intern."

He gave her a boyish smile. "Joyce? How come I haven't seen you around?" He asked. "Ah-"

"Hopper! On air in 5!" Came the command voice. He smiled at Joyce briefly and squeezed her hand. "Nice to meet you, Joyce." He said with a curt nod. "See you around." She nodded nervously and walked briskly back to behind the scenes.

He was so handsome. Reading off the boring afternoon news for the sleepy little town of Hawkins. Marissa read off the weather for the weekend. Sunshine till Monday. Powell read the sports. Back to James Hopper who smiled broadly and wished the town a good evening.

As soon as the show wrapped Jack, the director, called for a meeting. "Pam, Joyce, you too." He didn't sound very happy. "We're losing viewership." He informed them. "Marissa, I'm moving you to co anchor at the end of the month." Marissa broke out into a wide smile. "I want to see chemistry. James is my golden boy, I want a good rapport between you too. Flirty even. Every female in town wants him, as far as they know, you do too." James scoffed and rolled his eyes as Marissa shot him a heady glance.

"Who's doing weather? Callahan?" James teased, looking at their camera guy Cal.

"I've got two interns and one weather girl position. Joyce immediately reddened and held up her hands. "No! I'm training to run the camera. I can't-I can't be on tv!" She nearly pleaded, the blush creeping up her jaw. Beautiful blonde Pam with her nice boobs and shapely body would surely get it. Not frumpy Joyce in her Converse and flannels.

"But before then James, I'm sending you into the field for the Summer festival." James rolled his eyes again.

"Please don't stick me with kids, Jack."

"Short schtick then you can leave. It's a festival, James. If you get out and about with the locals maybe more of them will watch you. I want the women of this town in love with you and the men jealous." James snorted. "You must really think me a playboy, Jack."

"He's slept with half of the town." Marissa whispered to Pam, loud enough for Joyce to hear. She felt eyes on her and when she looked up she nearly bolted for the door. She caught him staring and the corners of his lips lifted in the ghost of a smile, acknowledging he had been caught before he turned his attention back to Jack.

"And before that, Fourth of July party at my house. Jackie's looking forward to cooking for all of you." He looked at Joyce and Pam, who had only worked there a year. "I live near the river. Fantastic view of the fireworks. Bring your boyfriends!" Joyce inwardly scoffed. Boyfriend, sure.

"You sure know how to boost a guy's ego, Jack." He smiled before he stood. "Who are you picking for weather girl, James?" Jack asked. James glanced between Joyce and Pam. "Pam. Was that your name?" He asked quietly and she nodded vigorously. Pam grinned broadly. Joyce swallowed back the sting. She knew it had been coming but did James really have to make the decision on it? "Sorry, Joyce." Pam apologized and Joyce half-heartedly shrugged. "I'm not tv material, really." Joyce admitted.

2. Fireworks

Summary for the Chapter:

James has a little fireworks of his own at the 4th of July cookout.

Joyce picked a simple light blue floral print dress and small heels. A light pink lipstick. And seeing as it was a hot July night, she pinned up her auburn hair. One last look in the mirror before she headed out to the party.

Jack's place was in the 70's 'modern' look with a pool, nestled against the river bank. Joyce frowned at the gathering party. She really had no desire to be here and she felt venerable without her usual armor of headphones and big t-shirts. Stepping out in one of the few dresses she owned felt like attending a spring formal versus her boss' cookout.

Jackie, Jack's wife, had taken quite a shine to Joyce when they first met and she greeted Joyce warmly at the door. "Happy 4th! No date?" She asked her quizzically after pleasantries were exchanged.

"No, no boyfriend." Joyce smiled nervously. "Single and not quite ready to mingle." She said with a forced laugh.

Jackie glanced out at the pool. "I hope you brought a swim suit, everyone else is enjoying the pool."

"No I didn't." Joyce replied calmly. She'd just assume die than wear her only bathing suit here, a frumpy beige one piece she'd bought on sale once.

Jackie eyeballed her. "I have a bikini that ties, it could fit you." Joyce's eyes grew wide. "No no no, that's quite alright. I don't feel up to swimming right now." She was lying. A dip in the cool pool on this sweltering hot night would be wonderful, but she'd rather not. "Offer stands if you change your mind." Jackie told her with a wink before leading her through the house to the back deck.

Pam ran to her and wrapped her arms around her. "Where is your bathing suit! I was about to get in, you should join us!" Joyce wished the earth would just open up and swallow her already.

"No, I'll just sit by the pool and wait for the fireworks." She replied. "I'd rather just enjoy the atmosphere." "Suit yourself!" Pam smiled broadly. "I'm going to go swim with James!"

He was seated on the diving board wearing a pair of blue swim trunks and a dark red Hawaiian print shirt buttoned down about three buttons, a hint of dark blonde chest hair peeking through. He nodded his head back and forth slightly to the Earth, Wind, and Fire tune playing loudly over the deck, his feet tapping along and causing little waves in the water. Pam slid into the pool and swam over to him, her light blonde hair wet and clinging into her face in attractive tendrils. James gave her a lopsided smile as they chatted and Joyce felt a stab of jealousy. Oh to be young and pretty. Now in her mid thirties and on the wrong side of a marriage, Joyce felt her days in the sun were already over.

Near the pool sat Powell and Callahan, embroiled in an conversation about sports. She opted for the chair between Cal and where Jack stood, manning the grill. She exchanged pleasantries with her boss and complimented his home, even if she secretly hated the 'modern' swinger style. Yes she had talked to Jackie. No, she hadn't brought a suit. She wasn't much of a swimmer. She spoke to Marissa, who honestly scared her a bit. Marissa was an intimidating woman and Jack's right hand woman.

Stealers Wheel began playing and Cal leaned close to her. "Clowns to the left of me-" he sang along, nodding to Jack and Marissa. "Jokers to the right-" nodding to Powell. "Here I am, stuck in the middle with you." He grinned. Joyce gave him a polite smile. Sure he was cute except his rather pornstar mustache, but too young for her.

When he went back to his conversation with Powell she sat back in the chair, reclining and crossing her ankles on the fold out. The mostly empty pool looked so inviting with its crystal clear water. Maybe she'd wander over in a bit and dip her feet in just to cool down. For now she watched Pam bob up and down in the water, carrying on a conversation with James. When Donna Summer's 'Hot

Stuff' began playing they both laughed loudly. Joyce rolled her eyes at the eating my heart out line, obviously what she was doing right now. At the song's chorus James stood up on the diving board, slowly undoing the buttons of his shirt as Pam and Marissa watched. He peeled his shirt from his shoulders revealing his still sculpted muscles, though a little soft around the middle. Pam moved aside and he dived into the pool, emerging with his hair wet and a smile on his face. Joyce audibly groaned.

Everyone was wrapped up in their own little worlds. Powell and Callahan. Pam and James. Jack, Jackie, and Marissa. No one notices frumpy Joyce, and no one will. The air was stifling hot, especially around the grill. "Jackie?" She asked lightly, gaining the older woman's attention. "Where's that bikini?"

Of course Jackie would own a racy red, skimpy bikini with ties at the sides, back, and neck. Joyce was mortified and was sure her skin matched the color of the bathing suit. But Jackie had tightened the ties for her and stood back admiring her. "It looks better on you than it does me, Joyce." She said with a jealous smirk.

While everyone was wrapped up in their own conversations Joyce padded out to the pool and tested the cool water with her toes. She stepped in, trying her hardest not to draw any attention to herself. She was mid calf in the water when she slid on the steps and caught herself on the handrail, drawing the attention of everyone at the party. And to make matters worse she had slipped as the radio played 'Do Ya Think I'm Sexy'. She dashed quickly into the pool and sank down to her neck in the water, absolutely mortified.

Pam swam over to her. "Are you okay Joyce?" Pam asked innocently.

"Yeah I'm fine, just a slip." When she looked past Pam's shoulder James was smirking. He swam over to her.

"Nice entrance, Joycie. I'm just teasing." He smiled lightly. "You okay?" He asked her.

"Yeah, I'm fine." She said darkly. He reached out to her in the water and found her hand. Her heart leapt in her throat at the contact.

"Come talk to us, stop being a wallflower." He told her. "I know you and Pam are buddies and I won't bite." He pulled her through the water over to where Pam was and he himself put his back against the pool wall, facing the two of them.

"Can you believe this lame festival thing I have to go to tomorrow?" James sighed. "Hey, you get to party two nights for the 4th. We have to work tomorrow!" Pam protested. There's a flirty edge to her voice that makes Joyce feel a pang of jealousy. She was never good at flirting herself.

"Joyce!" Jack called. "You have your first solo camera assignment tomorrow."

She blanched at the idea. "I'm not ready to do a whole show-" "Not the whole show. James' segment at the festival. Pretty young thing like you needs to get out once in a while too."

Joyce shot James a quizzical, 'is he serious?' sort of look. He gave her a bemused look and shrugged, his bottom lip poking out adorably. "Looks like it's a date Joycie!" He smiled.

After minutes of chit chat Jack called that the food was ready. The crew gathered around the patio table and gathered their food, passing condiments and handing out drinks. Jack, Jackie, Marissa, and Pam took the patio chairs and Powell and Cal took up two of the recliners. Joyce occupied the last lounge chair.

"Can I sit with you?" James asked, motioning to the end of her chair. "Sure." She replied. He sat straddle the end of the chair, laying his plate in front of him and setting his beer on the concrete.

She snickered. "You look like a monk with that brown towel over your head." He smiled at her and pulled it down around his neck. "Holy man I am not."

He made polite conversation with her about her home life and his. Both single. Both had a dog at home. Hers a black lab, his a golden retriever. No kids. No marriages for him, a brief one for her. She finished her plate and he gathered it with his trash, getting up and tossing it away before he moved back to her chair to sit back down.

How long had she worked at the station? Why hadn't she spoken to him before? He asked her why a pretty girl like herself didn't think she was tv material.

He leaned in close, "I would have picked you, but you acted like you really didn't want it." Her face and neck reddened. "Me on tv? N-no. I have no charisma. At all." "Psh. You just need a few lessons."

After a bit everyone made their way to the pool before the fireworks began. James was the first to get in, cannonballing into the pool. Powell pushed Callahan into the pool. Joyce sat at the side and gracefully slipped in. Pam walked down the steps gracefully and James eyeballed her the entire time, making jealousy flare up in Joyce. He seemed so open to her earlier, so genuine. And now he eyed Pam like a piece of meat. The fireworks began low over the river and Joyce ended up at the back of the crowd next to James. She stood on her tip toes, struggling to see over the tops of Marissa and Jack's heads.

James noticed her plight and grabbed her by the hand, pulling her over to the diving board at the end of the pool, away from the crowd. "Scoot up." He said lightly when she sat straddle the board and he sat behind her. The sky exploded in flashes of multiple colors. A particular beautiful blue bloomed in the sky and Joyce audibly awwed over it. She watched Jack hold Jackie during the show and reflexively glanced behind her. He was so close. Close enough to feel his body heat.

'Careless Whisper' began playing and he snorted. "Well isn't this a scene straight from a romance movie?" He chuckled. She turned to look at him. "Romance movies are cheesy." She grinned. "Not when it happens in real life." He said lowly, watching the light dance across the side of her face. She laughed.

"Are you trying to tell me your a romantic?" She teased and he leaned in close. "What if I told you I always wanted to hold someone while we watch fireworks?" She made an amused noise. "Like you've every had to worry about finding someone to hold."

"Humor me, please? If you want to." She sighed, acknowledging she had been thinking the same thing and leaned back against his chest.

A burst of green went off high over the river and they both looked up. "I mean you've felt it too, right? There's something here." He said as he wrapped his arms around her shoulders. "Yeah, you eyeing Pam."

He shook his head over Joyce's shoulder. "She's sleeping with Cal." Joyce nearly fell off the diving board. "What!" She sputtered. "Yeah. And Marissa sleeps with Jack AND Jackie." "You're lying!" Joyce said in a surprised whisper. "Serious as a heart attack. And they talk about me like I'm such a playboy." He said as red exploded across the sky with a crack.

When the fireworks ended Joyce sat up abruptly and James' arms fell to his sides. He breathed in deeply and slid off the board into the water. Everyone fell into easy conversation as the party began to thin, people beginning to change and leave.

Jim lay a hand on her calf when she moved to leave the board. "Hey, I'm glad you're going with me tomorrow." She nodded and gave him a small smile. "Goodnight, James." She got up to change and leave, leaving him alone in the pool.

3. Rain, rain

Summary for the Chapter:

James and Joyce have some fun.

"Good job kid!" James congratulated her as she set down the heavy tv camera. She'd followed him all around the festival, catching him talking to families and playing a few scattered games. He looked less intimidating in his light blue short sleeved button up and khaki board shorts. Joyce was sweating it out in jeans and a Led Zeppelin shirt.

"Now time to have some fun!" Jim said, eyebrows raised. "I just wanna go back to the station! It's so hot and this camera is so heavy!"

"So take the camera back to the van, grab a pair of scissors and cut your jeans into shorts. Are you really gonna pass up a chance to get paid for having fun? Jack said you needed to be out and about." Joyce huffed and smoothed her sweaty hair from her face.

"I cut them too short!" Joyce fretted loudly through the closed doors at the back of the van.

"No such thing as too short shorts!" He smiled. "Just come out here!"

Joyce stepped out of the van, her light washed jeans cut off mid thigh. He raised his eyebrows at her. "Scared to show off three inches above the knee, Byers? You got nothing to hide, honey." Joyce's cheeks burned. He retrieved a thick rubber band from the table in the back of the van. "C'mon put your hair up and let's go!" He grinned as he offered her his arm.

There was a Doobie Brothers cover band playing under a small tent in the middle of the field and James pulled her near as they began playing 'Listen to the Music'. He smiled at her and gestured for her to move her hips. "Will you lighten up, Byers?" He teased. "I'm not going to bite you! Dance with me." She shook her head. "I don't dance!" He pulled her closer. "Stop thinking so much! Just let the music move

you!"

She smiled broadly as they danced, him singing along at the top of his lungs. He reached for her hands and twirled her, her hair shimmering in the sun. "Doesn't it feel good to loosen up?" He teased.

When the song ended he pulled her to a food vendor where he bought them lemonade and a cinnamon pretzel to share. They sat in the grass under a shade tree and ate, watching people dance. "Are you enjoying yourself?" He asked and she nodded vigorously, mid chew of pretzel. He laughed at her. "I'm glad he sent you on this trip. Cal wouldn't have been this much fun." He joked.

Joyce looked up at the overcast sky. "Was that a raindrop?" She asked. He paused playing the ring toss he was doing at the game booth and looked up. "Maybe, Marissa did say there was a light chance of rain today." As if on cue, thunder rumbled, making him miss his shot and he lost the game. "Yeah, back to the van." He mumbled.

Halfway across the field fat water drops began falling. "Shit! Hustle! Hustle!" She called over her shoulder as she made a dash for the van.

"Shit!" He called out as the sky fell out and a sheet of rain hit them, sending cold water down their backs and soaking their hair. He dashed ahead and opened the back doors of the van hurriedly, jumping in. He pulled her in and pulled the door shut behind them. "Well fuck!" He laughed, shaking the water from his hair. Joyce pulled her knees to her chest, shaking in the sudden cold. He leaned forward and rubbed his hands up and down her arms, trying to help warm her.

"Well, that was fun while it lasted!" He said and they smiled each other. "Yeah! It was!" She agreed. "I guess we should head back to work."

"We're not due back for another hour. We can have a little more fun before we head back." She shot him a quizzical look and he fished behind the desk. He presented her with a small baggie of joints. "I don't smoke." She replied, shaking her head.

"Ever done it?" He asked and she shook her head. "Then don't be square." He teased, placing one of them between his lips and lighting it. He inhaled and offered it to her. "C'mon. Jack doesn't give a shit if we smoke. He buys the weed for us, actually." She looked up at him with her big brown eyes.

Joyce felt like she was floating, laying on the floor in the back of the van. James grinned down at her. "Feeling pretty good?" She giggled and waved him over. "Give it back!" He smiled around the joint and puffed before he passed it back to her. "Last hit kiddo. Enjoy it." She breathed in deep and exhaled a cloud of smoke. "God, I have missed out of this the whole time?" He laughed at her. "Well, you're always welcome to smoke with me!"

He leaned over her to reach the ashtray on the desk and she leaned up, bracing her weight on one elbow while she wrapped her arm around his middle. He gave her a surprised look and let her pull him to the floor with her. She was looking him over, memorizing his features as he began to smile. "What?" He laughed. "You have a beautiful face!" She giggled before she kissed him.

He pulled back and looked her in the eyes before he kissed her again. She pulled him over on top of her and he rested between her slender legs, weight on his elbows as she pulled his face closer. Water ran from his hair, landing in small droplets on her face as they kissed. "Shoulda got you stoned sooner." He teased against her lips.

"You talk too much." She smiled. "Shut up and kiss me."

His mouth moved against hers, tongue gently probing for access. She obliged and he deepened the kiss. Her hands wandered his back, rubbing circles on his shirt. He parted for air and looked into her eyes. "You're really something, Joycie."

Her eyes wandered to his lips. "Do you like me, James?" The corners of his mouth upturned into full smile. "I mean, it's not just the weed?"

He audibly laughed. "I thought I made it pretty clear at the party last night. I like you, Joyce. I think we've got something going here." She leaned up to kiss him again.

"Just don't hurt me, please?" He smiled again. "Wouldn't dream of it, sweetheart."

4. Thunder

Summary for the Chapter:

Joyce is unsure of James' attraction to her.

He could tell Pam was getting frustrated. She showed more cleavage, her skirts hiked just a little higher. Dresses just a little tighter. Breasts and backside always for his viewing. She always volunteered to bring him his coffee, his new notes. She'd kept up her visual assaults through out the month, trying her damndest to get him to sleep with her.

Marissa had a similar agenda and she and Pam were in competition, vying for a spot with him. Meanwhile he and Joyce traded heady glances and secret kisses when no one was looking. She was still hesitant to put a label on the relationship but for once, he didn't mind taking things slow. She had resisted his few attempts to further their relationship but he took it in stride.

Joyce squeaked in surprise when she was pulled into an equipment room in the station. James shushed her with a grin.

"What are you doing?" She smiled back. "I've had you on my mind." He said.

"You've been making googly eyes at me all day, Hop." She teased as he leaned in close. "I don't know, there's just something about you, Joyce Byers."

Joyce rolled her eyes. "You are such a sap. There's nothing special about me." His being in a suit and her in an oversized flannel seemed to illustrate the differences between them. "You think I like being in this monkey suit?" He smiled as he moved in to kiss her.

"I don't know why we're sneaking around if everyone here is sleeping with everyone else." She said against his lips. "Isn't it more fun this way?" He smiled against the fair skin of her neck.

"We're moving a little fast aren't we? I mean we got high in the van a

month ago and made out. Now we're an item? A secret one at that?"

He did that adorable pout with his mouth again. "What, you don't like me?" He asked sarcastically. "No. I mean I do. I do like you. But I'm not some sexy young thing you can brag about sneaking around with." She said, looking down at her shoes. How does she manage to get herself in these situations?

"Joycie, honey." He took her face in both hands. "I like you because your different. I mean, you are a sexy young thing. You act like you don't know it. You're attractive, Joyce. But you don't act like the world owes you something. You're my girl next door."

Joyce scoffed loudly. "Seriously? Girl next door?" He rolled his eyes. "I mean maybe not that. I don't know how to explain it. You are not like Pam, you are not like Jackie or Marissa. And I really dig that. But I do think you don't give yourself enough credit." He pulled her closer and leaned down to kiss her. "I'm not good with words, okay? That's why I read my lines from a teleprompter. But just trust me, okay? I am wildly attracted to you."

"I worked here a while and just this past month you decide I'm your flavor of the month?" She asked and he rolled his eyes. "Look, I don't know. You flew under my radar when we weren't interacting, okay? I was not looking to date anyone. But I really like you Joycie."

She gave him a half smile and stood on her tiptoes, hands braced on his chest as she leaned up to kiss him. "This is kinda fun, sneaking around with you." He gave her a smug smile. Their little moment was interrupted by Jack's voice calling James.

"Shit." He said scrambling around for some excuse as to why he was in a supply closet. He grabbed a dead microphone and set his working one on the shelf. He gave her another quick peck before he slipped out of the closet. "Jack, I swear half of the mics around this place don't work!"

When all attention was on James she slid out of the closet. "James, I got you." She said, walking up to him and changing his dead mic with the live one he had left behind. No one was any the wiser of their closet meeting.

"Thanks, sug." He commented under his breath, giving her a sly wink.

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They began another rehearsal with Marissa as co-anchor and Pam as the weather girl. Joyce thought Pam looked great on camera but she came across as flat and robotic. She also thought Marissa came off as slightly snobby. And when it came to flirting with James, she poured it on thick.

"Alright, everyone is doing great!" Jack praised and Joyce hid her disapproval.

"James, you've got to play off of Marissa. I need a good rapport here!"

James huffed. "I read off a teleprompter, Jack!"

"What's the matter James, don't like me?" Marissa asked with wink. He groaned and rubbed his temples.

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After the actual filming of that nights show, Pam approached James. "Hey, would you like to grab a coffee?" She asked. He ran a hand across the back of his neck. "Raincheck, maybe?" He asked.

She looked disappointed and leaned in close. "I'm not seeing Cal anymore." She said lowly. "And I'd very much like to see you." He shrugged. "Now's just not a good time, Pam. I'm sorry."

"James, why do you keep turning me down?" She asked. "It's just not a good time, Pam."

"Are you seeing someone else?" She asked.

"Maybe."

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"Can I buy you dinner sometime this week?" He asked Joyce during

one their secret talks in the empty breakroom. "Maybe rent a movie, eat some dinner at my place? You can meet my dog, Max!" He suggested.

"I don't know, James. I don't know if I'm ready-"

"No pressure for anything. Just dinner and a movie." He said in a serious tone. "Though I wouldn't mind kissing you a little."

"Alright. Maybe just a little." She grinned, pulling him down by his tie to kiss him.

The gasp from the doorway interrupted them.

Pam was in tears. She tore off her mic and handed it to Jack. "I can't do this! I can't work here anymore!"

"What is it? What happened?" He asked, trying to get the blonde to calm down. "Pam we can work it out!" He called after her as she stormed out, heels clacking on the tile.

James looked vaguely guilty and Joyce busied herself with cleaning her camera.

"James, what did you do?" Jack demanded. "I guess she had this crush on me and I just wasn't interested." James explained.

Jack sigh and set back in his chair. "So whose going to be my weather anchor now?"

"Joyce." James said sternly and she nearly jumped out of her skin. "No, no, I couldn't possibly-" James turned to look at her.

"Joyce, you can do it. I know you can."

Author's Note:

I knooooow it's been forever and a half since I posted much of anything new. But ya see, I sorta fell in love

and stuff. And it's all Hopper's fault. i roleplayed with her as her Hopper (we'll eventually post it!) and things just took off from there. Thanks for being my wing man, Hopper :)